

Victim Impact Statement

By Toni Dian Nunes

August 28, 2018 - 11:25 am

I noticed a black 4-door sedan driving very slowly by our house. At the same time, my husband, Anthony Jr. also noticed the vehicle and shouted out, "That's the same car I saw yesterday drive by the dairy! I'm going to see who it is!" The tone of his voice was genuinely concerning and caught me by surprise—I was frightened. Anthony then went to his pickup. I went into the garage and observed the same black vehicle parked on the dead-end street, just east of our house. I could see Anthony was now pulling around the corner. I ran out into the yard and took 3 pictures. The man identified himself to my husband as Ryan Lizza.

I learned later that our neighbor to the west, Alisa Stanton, also saw the vehicle parked near her house. She thought it was strange. And the neighbors of my son and daughter-in-law, Anthony III and Lori Nunes, also observed a vehicle parked near their home, on Walnut Dr.

On that day, as a precaution, I picked up my granddaughters—Makinley (age 7), Maci (age 10), and Madison (age 12)—at their school, 18 miles away in Sheldon, IA. I was extremely concerned and arrived early so I could walk directly to the school entrance and personally pick them up. We then returned to Sibley and met their mother, Lori, in downtown. She did not want them to return to the house alone.

This was a very scary time as it was clear that someone was stalking our homes and business. We found out later that he was going around town asking about us. I felt very unsafe.

August 29, 2018 – 8:22 am

I drove out to our dairy farm, NuStar Farms LLC., to find that my son, Anthony III, had placed bales of straw at the entrances to the dairy. I took 2 pictures. At this point I became concerned for the safety of our employees as well as my family. This was a frightening event that had never happened to us before.

Later that day, sometime after 12:00 noon, I went into downtown Sibley. I stopped by the local gift store, The Porch on Main. While inside the business, I noticed that the same black car that had stalked our house, our neighbors' houses, and our business was now parked across the street in front of the Pizza Ranch Restaurant. As I left the business and crossed the street to return to my car, I observed a man walking down the street. It appeared he was leaving the local bar and bowling alley, The Re-Bar.

Not wanting to be confronted, I quickly stepped into The Lantern Coffee Shop. I then observed the man going into the store I had just left. I was genuinely frightened, as it seemed the man was following me. I ordered an iced tea and told the waitress that I thought someone was following me. I asked her if there was a back entrance to the building. She said yes and pointed it out to me.

About that time, the man came out of The Porch on Main and was talking to the owner, Julie Ackerman. The waitress at the coffee shop recognized him and said that he had also been in the coffee shop and had talked to the owner of the Lantern, Brenda Hoyer.

The man then left the Porch on Main and departed in his car. I felt relieved, got to my car, and went home. The entire episode left me deeply shaken.

In the days that followed, many townspeople contacted us regarding the strange man who had been asking strange questions about us. We heard he had given people different explanations as to why he was in town.

September 30, 2018

A whole new round of disturbing events began after Esquire published the story, "Devin Nunes's Family Farm Is Hiding a Politically Explosive Secret." The story, filled with false allegations about my family and our business, received national attention. At various times, when I've done Google searches of my name, the names of my family members, or even "Sibley, Iowa," this article appeared prominently in the results.

People in town began asking us about the allegations in the story. Some people expressed concern that we had drawn negative attention to the town.

Our family started getting harassing phone calls at our homes and on our cell phones. Many callers used foul language and accused us of all sorts of crimes, and some were of a threatening nature. In fear, I finally had all calls routed to the answering machine. I cautioned my granddaughters to be careful and not to answer the phone if they did not recognize the number. If they saw a stranger following them, I told them to immediately contact one of us or call 911.

Unknown, out-of-town people began driving by our dairy farm and homes. I also repeatedly suspected that I was being followed. For the safety of our employees, we installed "No Trespassing" signs and additional camera surveillance at our dairy farm.

At a meeting of ladies of the local church, St. Andrew Catholic Church, I was asked about the article. The congregation was concerned. I told them about the vile phone calls and unwanted contacts. I cautioned them to be careful. If they saw or heard anything out of the ordinary, I said they should immediately call the Osceola County Sheriff's Office.

After the meeting, I spoke personally with my friend, Bonnie Gregg. I wanted to make sure she understood that I was truly frightened by this horrible situation. I also, spoke with my neighbor across the street, Bob Alexander. He said he thought there had been some extra traffic on our remote street and that he would be on the lookout.

As a result of the Esquire article, we continue to be subjected to this harassment to this day. Strangers from out of town still drive by our homes and business, and we still receive unwanted phone calls and contacts. This fall, trespassers placed threatening signs on our property.

But the lies and falsehoods in the article remain on the internet, with no way to remove or correct them.

The fallout has placed real financial strains on our operation. Business associates and potential associates have questioned our credibility and integrity. We are constantly under review. Our way of life is in the balance, and there is nothing we can do to correct this.

This has caused my family a lot of grief, anxiety, and stress, leading to sleepless nights and ongoing health issues. We live in fear. The fear in the eyes of my family is unbearable, especially my granddaughters'. No one should have to live life like this. It is heartbreaking.

In closing, I want to make the following statement:

I am a private citizen.

I have a responsibility to protect my family, especially my 6 beautiful granddaughters.

I am a small family farmer. As an employer, I must protect my dedicated employees.

And as community member, I have a responsibility to be a good citizen and friend to my neighbors.

NuStar Farms LLC is a privately owned, small family farm on 45 acres in rural Iowa.

It is owned by my husband and myself: Anthony Jr and Toni Dian Nunes.

We are proudly passing on the ownership to my son and daughter-in-law, Anthony III and Lori Nunes.

They manage the day-to-day operation of the dairy.

We have worked a lifetime to build up this farm.

As a private citizen, I should not be treated as I have been by Ryan Lizza and Esquire magazine.

I am not afraid of the media, which only produce words on a piece of paper or a computer screen.

But I am afraid of the crazy people who believe these lies and act on them.

The media has a responsibility to report the facts.

They do not have the right to falsely attack me—a private citizen—and my family in order to further their own political agenda.